

eSCHOOLMEDIA presents...

2012-13

# READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Fifty ed-tech products and services  
that are making a difference in schools



**Inside this special supplement, you'll find:**

- Our readers' top 50 choices for K-12 and higher-education technologies and websites
- Descriptions of each resource—including what it is and how it has enhanced teaching, learning, or school administration
- 72 "honorable mentions": More products or services that are among our readers' favorites



## **A note from the editor**

This past spring, we asked readers to give us their top picks for school hardware, software, websites, and services. Nearly 1,300 readers responded via one of our three websites: eSchoolNews.com, eCampusNews.com, and eClassroomNews.com.



In nominating their favorite products, we asked readers to tell us how they're using these products to improve teaching, learning, or school administration—and to what effect. We then chose the 50 best responses, which appear alphabetically by product name and grouped into two categories: K-12 and higher education.

The result is a list of ed-tech products and services that have proven to be effective, as noted by our readers—your colleagues—in schools and colleges nationwide.

We hope you'll find this information useful as you consider how technology can help transform education in your own schools. And watch for our call for nominations for the 2013-14 Readers' Choice Awards in print and online early next year.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis Pierce".

Dennis Pierce  
Editor  
eSchool Media



## K-12 winners

### Aerohive Wireless Access Points (Aerohive Networks)

Aerohive's distributed, scalable wireless architecture delivers enterprise-grade service in a cost-effective way. It allows for simple, centralized management and delivers unique classroom monitoring capabilities for better control at the classroom level.

"AeroHive provided the hardware to create a school-wide wireless network that has proven to be a rock-solid performer," said Raymond Schlosser, Technology Coordinator for Notre Dame Academy in Kentucky. "[Aerohive's] intelligent access points and controller-free hosted configurations have required very little time to manage, and [its] interface is easy to use. [Its] teacher view software allows teachers to control when students in their classes have access to the internet and LAN, giving them better classroom management and helping to keep students on task."

<http://www.aerohive.com>



### BoardDocs

BoardDocs' paperless services allow school districts to improve how they create and manage board packets and conduct meetings—saving time and money while enhancing transparency. All BoardDocs solutions are fully supported on most mobile devices, including the Apple iPad, and include 24-7 technical support with every subscription.

"Our school district has been using BoardDocs ... since 2005. It saves our district a huge amount of money, because everything is done on the computer, and we were able to quit using reams and reams of paper," said Kristy Rodri, a school board member for Durango School District 9-R in Colorado. "It archives our past board meetings, minutes, and newsletters, as well as our policies—so we can access information at any time. ... The information [that] is only for the board members' eyes can be put into a confidential section, which is password-protected and cannot be accessed by the public. ... The product is amazing, and [BoardDocs] should be recognized for how responsive they are in the customer service area: They listen to their customers and come up with exciting additions all the time."

<http://boarddocs.com>



### Centricity2 (Schoolwires)

Centricity2 is a website and content management system that brings together all a



school system's information in one place, with group management capabilities, mobile device support, and a suite of Web 2.0 tools. It's designed to integrate seamlessly with all compatible systems, data, and third-party applications, and district leaders can measure their community's engagement through integrated web analytics that help monitor users' online activity.

"In my opinion, Schoolwires has created the ultimate content management environment for digital communication," said George Weeks, director of technology for New Jersey's Glassboro Public Schools. "Centricity makes it easy to keep our sites fresh and continually update the information we present to the public. The backend interface is easy to use, allowing anyone to edit a page, a section, or an entire site—making the traditional webmaster obsolete. Web page editing is as simple as creating an eMail. ... With this product, we have been able to make our web portal the primary source for information about the schools. Web statistics show a steady increase in unique visitors every month since we implemented the product five years ago."

<http://www.schoolwires.com>

### Doceri (SP Controls)

Doceri is an iPad app and desktop software program for controlling presentations and lessons remotely. It lets users control a computer (Mac or Windows), launch any document or application, and annotate over them at any time.

When used in conjunction with SP Controls' Network Room Controller, Doceri also can remotely control projectors, DVD players, and other AV devices.

"Doceri is a remote iPad app that I use almost daily in my classroom," said Jennifer DiPasquale, a teacher at Pennsylvania's North Hills School District. "It has completely eliminated the use of the [interactive whiteboard] in my classroom. I [can] allow my students to write on my iPad and project it on my screen. I am able to watch my students through Apple Remote Desktop, but I watch them on my iPad so I am not stuck in one place in the room. Students enjoy writing on the iPad and seeing it on the big screen. ... I love Doceri!"

<http://www.spcontrols.com>







## DreamBox Learning

DreamBox is an intelligent, adaptive learning platform for teaching elementary-level math. Based on whether students give right or wrong answers to questions, the software adapts the level of difficulty, scaffolding, sequencing, and pacing of the problems they see—ensuring that every student works in his or her optimal learning zone, from struggling to advanced.

“We are using DreamBox Learning with all of our first graders and with some students in kindergarten, second, and third grade for intervention,” said Michelle Tomlin, district facilitator for the Kirkwood, Mo., schools. “We have seen growth in our students’ number sense. The students regularly make connections to what they are learning in math class from what they are doing in DreamBox. The transfer of learning is great.”

<http://www.dreambox.com>



## Education2020 (e2020 Inc.)

e2020 provides instruction in virtual and blended learning environments for students in grades 6-12. Emphasizing instructional content in both core and elective subjects, e2020's programs help students recover and accrue credits



for graduation, participate in Advanced Placement courses, and prepare for state, end-of-course, and standardized assessments.

“We have used e2020 for credit recovery as well as a complete school curriculum. It ... allows us to customize the learning experiences for our students based on prescriptive testing,” said Kenneth Kuczynski, CEO of Christina International High School, a virtual school based in Minnesota. “Our students find lectures to be complete and easy to follow. The assignments are challenging, and each course aligns with state core standards. We also like the selection of teacher tools that allow for very focused diagnostics. The parent portal and teacher tools are very valuable resources.”

<http://www.education2020.com>

## eBeam (Luidia)

eBeam is a portable device that transforms any flat surface into a dynamic, digital workspace, allowing users to

interact with whiteboard notes and projected content.

“I’m in charge of delivering technologies to my teachers that can truly make a difference in the classroom,” said Danielle Kazoroski, network/technology associate for Brevard County Schools in Florida. “After conducting thorough research, my principal and I decided to purchase 30 eBeam Edge devices because of [their] open software approach, which allows us to make the most out of the tools we already have [and] provides a path to maximize our technology investment for years to come. Our teachers and students love the technology, because it is incredibly easy to install and use. Every classroom in grades two through six has a device, and many teachers use the eBeam technology to capture lessons and upload content to the class website for continued at-home learning. ... Aside from being fun for the students, teachers share that the eBeam technology has measurably improved student interactivity and engagement.”

<http://www.e-beam.com>



## Edmodo

A free social network just for schools, Edmodo gives teachers and students a



secure place to connect and collaborate, share content and educational applications, and access homework, grades, class discussions, and notifications.

“The entire website has made my life as a teacher so much more easy and stress free,” said Taylor Hopewell, a theatre arts teacher at St. Bernard High School in California. “I can connect to my students online, grade assignments in a snap, keep track of those grades, making better use of paper (helping the environment), and most importantly, I get my students interacting with each other. They want to learn, [and] they socialize with each other, asking important questions and having debates. It’s amazing to see the students get excited about learning. I love Edmodo!”

<http://www.edmodo.com>

## EduVision (JDL Horizons)

EduVision is a full-featured video streaming platform and internet broadcast TV service that allows schools and districts to upload and run video on their websites.

EduVision “enables districts to easily upload videos and



make them available through a user-friendly interface,” said Jeanine Gendron, director of instructional technology for Florida’s Broward County Schools. “In Broward, EduVision is being used in two different ways to support the educational community. First, the Department of Instructional Technology has used EduVision to upload videos focused on classroom practices, strategies, and lessons that exemplify how to integrate technology into teaching and learning. Teachers then view and share their classroom ideas, which supports professional learning. Second, EduVision is used to stream school board meetings and workshops in real time. The video streams are made available through the district website and are accessible via a computer, laptop, or mobile device—including iPads, tablets, and smart phones. The videos are then stored and can be retrieved immediately for review. ... EduVision has enabled Broward to effectively integrate video streaming and video distribution to provide timely communications to its entire community and has resulted in a positive change in how communication occurs.”

<http://www.eduvision.tv>

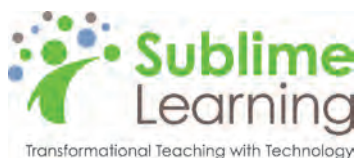


### eTeachables (Sublime Learning)

eTeachables are brief, on-demand video tutorials that model effective teaching with various technology tools, to help teachers answer the “how and why” of technology-based instruction.

“The eTeachables ... help teachers quickly create high-quality, standards-based lessons that utilize 21st-century tools,” said Anne Callies, assistive technology coordinator for the San Diego Unified School District, which uses the product as part of its professional development for teachers in the district’s groundbreaking i21 Interactive Classroom program. “Everything you need to create your own customized and differentiated lesson is right there. Everyone who has used these lessons has raved about them and how easy they are to implement.”

<http://sublimelearning.com>



### FluidMath (Fluidity Software)

FluidMath is a teaching and learning tool designed for users of pen-centric platforms such as tablet PCs and interactive whiteboards. It features accurate recognition of handwritten math symbols, allowing teachers and students to share concepts and explore ideas electronically.

“FluidMath is the best software for teaching and learning mathematics I have used in my 25-year career,” said Nils Ahbel, a math teacher at Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts.

“FluidMath recognizes standard math notation written in handwriting and brings the math alive. ... With FluidMath, the tablet PC is not used as a substitute for manipulation skills, but rather as a tool for investigation. This change in perspective is incredibly important—it helps students be mathematicians and not just learn mathematics.”

<http://fluiditysoftware.com>



### Gaggle Apps (Gaggle Inc.)

Gaggle Apps are online tools for students to communicate and collaborate in a safe, filtered, and controlled environment. Tools include eMail, digital lockers, discussion boards, chat rooms, blogs, assignment drop boxes, and more.

“Our third, fourth, and fifth graders have safe monitored eMail, social walls, blogs, IM, homework drop boxes, digital lockers, and more with this online resource,” said Camella Herrin, technology facilitator for Cabarrus County Schools in North Carolina. “The opportunity to teach students the ethical and correct usage of such online resources has been phenomenal. We began with eMail and have now begun to branch out to social walls for our fifth graders and blogging between teachers and their students. The levels of control are managed by the designated school administrator for Gaggle, and this allows different apps within Gaggle to be rolled out as teachers and students are ready for them—not before! There is even an app called GaggleTube, which is filtered YouTube. Teachers approve educational and timely videos, and students may access them within GaggleTube in a safe manner.”

<http://www.gaggle.net>



### Gooru (Ednovo)

Gooru is a free search engine for learning. Teachers and students can use Gooru to search for rich collections of multimedia resources, digital textbooks, videos, games, and quizzes created by educators in the Gooru community. Collections are aligned with standards and currently cover every math and science topic from grades 5-12, with other subjects coming soon.





Gooru “has been instrumental in our efforts to flip our entire school,” said Greg Green, principal of Clintondale High School in Michigan. “Gooru provides 30,000 free resources that enable our teachers to flip our classrooms and to meet our students’ personal learning needs. ... We have received so much attention; however, we could not do it without Gooru assisting us. They provide us an invaluable, web-based LMS solution that is unmatched, with plentiful resources and collaboration capabilities.”

<http://www.goorulearning.org>

## Infosnap

Infosnap is a provider of online admission and registration solutions for K-12 schools. It offers secure, customized online forms based on a school or district’s existing enrollment processes. Data submitted through these forms are delivered from the infosnap software to the school’s student information system, and administrative tools enable school leaders to polish the data and run customized reports.



“The Carlisle Area School District uses infosnap for pre-registration and registration of new students, as well as annual student and staff updates,” said Stephanie Douglas, director of technology for this Pennsylvania district. “Infosnap has saved our district tens of thousands of dollars in copier, printer, paper, toner and other expenses to create packets of forms. As important, it has increased the efficiencies to gather emergency, medical, demographic, and other information from students. Instead of waiting for students to return completed forms over the first few weeks of school, we had 72 percent of [the necessary] student information before the opening day of school. With the integration to our student information system, this information was available for teachers, staff, and administrators immediately—removing the need for support staff to read all forms of handwriting [and] enter [the data] into our SIS. ... Implementing this system was one of the biggest and most positive changes for our district in recent memory.”

<http://www.infosnap.com>

## Insight 360 (eInstruction)

Insight 360 is a “formative instruction” system designed to simplify the practice of formative assessment in conjunction with interactive teaching. Insight 360 enables educators to obtain instant feedback on student learning through an easy-to-use suite of mobile devices, software, and instructional material that is interoperable with their existing technology and systems, the company says.

“Our third-grade teacher, Ms. Ingrid Oyen, is using the new Insight 360 system for daily formative assessment in her math class,” said Mark Hupp, director of technology for Salt Creek 48 schools in Illinois. “Beginning the year

with CPS (eInstruction’s earlier offering), Ms. Oyen has driven math achievement off the charts. Now, Ms. Oyen has seamlessly moved to eInstruction’s revolutionary Insight 360 system—providing her even easier, more natural access to real-time formative assessment data. The Insight 360 system is so easy, so comfortable, and so powerful that Ms. Oyen and I believe it to be the holy grail of response products. The ability to tag almost any file format—including SMART Notebook [content]—means that it is not only platform agnostic, but also software agnostic. Now, Ms. Oyen can use all of her old digital content with her clickers—a huge plus!”

<http://www.einstruction.com>



## Jing (TechSmith)

Jing is a simple and free software program that lets users capture an image or screen shot of what’s on their computer, as well as record



up to five minutes of on-screen video. Two other products from TechSmith, Snagit and Camtasia, are useful for editing screencasts and sharing video and also received several nominations from readers.

“This is an amazing tool, both in its simplicity and in its functionality,” said Jeffrey Getchell, director of learning technologies for Regis University. “Faculty use Jing to illustrate processes for students. Rather than an office visit, faculty can record short tutorials and send [them] to students or post into online courses. Administrators use Jing to provide the occasional tutorial for faculty. Rather than spending inordinate amounts of time on the phone, support folks can create a short screen video or capture and send [it] directly by eMail. And when a computer issue crops up, employees can send screen shots of error messages directly to the IT help desk that illustrate the problem better than time spent on the phone. And it’s free. This is what open resources are all about: simple tools providing specific functions that are easy to use and freely accessible.”

<http://www.techsmith.com>





## Ko's Journey (Imagine Education)

Ko's Journey is a 12-hour middle school math game that takes a targeted approach to math instruction in a part-time, six-week program focusing on the critical areas of the Common Core standards.

"We are using this extensively in multiple pilot schools within the Los Angeles Unified School District," said Scott Spector, career and technical education advisor for the district's Office of Curriculum and Instruction. "We have seen dramatic test-score improvement with those students using Ko's Journey in their math classes. ... Students have been engaged in the process of learning math. This has not happened at many of the schools currently using Ko's Journey. It has also helped the teachers with classroom management—students spend more time on task."

<http://www.kosjourney.com>



## LabQuest (Vernier Software & Technology)

Vernier's LabQuest 2 is a standalone interface used to collect sensor data with a built-in graphing and analysis application. The large, high-resolution touch screen makes it easy and intuitive to collect, analyze, and share data from experiments, Vernier says, and its wireless connectivity encourages collaboration and personalized learning.

"The strongest feature of the LabQuest unit is that it is simple enough for an elementary student to use for experiments, and the data that it can produce are detailed enough that it also can be used for high school and college inquiries," said Connie Bachmann, principal of a K-5 STEM magnet school in the Michigan City Area Schools. "Because it is handheld, it is easy to use by individuals or in a small group setting. ... Our students have truly gained a better understanding of scientific inquiry as they personally engaged in data collection with the LabQuests." Another reader called the LabQuest "rugged and affordable, and customer service is top notch."

<http://www.vernier.com>



## MyLearningPlan

MyLearningPlan is a professional development management and evaluation system that offers fast and easy planning, tracking, and evaluation of all kinds of professional learning in one comprehensive, online system.

"Our district uses MyLearningPlan to organize professional development activities," said Jennifer Brucker, coordinator of professional development for Pennsylvania's Methacton School District. "The activities are displayed in an electronic catalog for teachers to enroll in for an in-service day, flex hours, and/or district training. MyLearningPlan then enables an administrator to confirm attendance and send the activity to the state for Act 48 credit to be given. The

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process is effortless! We also use MyLearningPlan to run district reports to determine where we have spent our federal funds for professional learning. ... Overall, MyLearningPlan has changed the way we do business in our district."

<http://www.mylearningplan.com>

## My Big Campus (Lightspeed Systems)

My Big Campus offers a safe, monitored environment for students to blog, hold discussions, and collaborate on group projects online. A standalone version is available for individual teachers or professional networks, while a district-wide version integrates with Lightspeed's Web Filter to offer cross-district sharing of resources and additional management and reporting features.

**my Big Campus**

"We are using My Big Campus in a variety of ways," said Sandy Bader, technology training specialist for the Unified School District of De Pere, Wis. "Teachers are using it with their classes to have online discussions. ... Teachers are also creating 'public' groups as a way of communicating with parents, although the communication at that level is providing information to parents (not two-way). It has allowed teachers to have their own web presence and has given students and teachers a way to communicate online that is safe and controlled."

<http://www.mybigcampus.com>

## NComputing L300 (NComputing Inc.)

The L300 is a virtual desktop client device with a sleek, low-power design that can be mounted on a monitor or secured to a desk. The L300 costs less than other thin- or zero-client options and is a quarter of the cost of a typical



desktop PC, NComputing says. With the ability to connect up to 100 users to a single NComputing vSpace server, the product offers a simple, powerful, and inexpensive desktop virtualization solution.

"We use NComputing products to leverage our budget toward a better student-to-workstation ratio," said Robert Haviland, technology coordinator for the Hickman County Schools in Tennessee. "For a fraction of the cost [of a full PC], we can add seats quickly to our network."

<http://www.ncomputing.com>

### NetSupport School (NetSupport Inc.)

NetSupport School is a classroom-management solution for Windows machines that gives teachers the ability to instruct, monitor, and interact with their students either individually, as a pre-defined group, or as an entire class. It includes PC monitoring, presentation and annotation tools, a customized testing suite, internet and application control, real-time audio monitoring, desktop security, and print management capabilities. (A corresponding program, NetSupport Assist, can do the same for Mac and Linux-based devices.)

"I use this product every day both to maintain an effective teaching environment when students are spread throughout the lab, and when I'm doing maintenance



duties on all the machines when students are not present," said Jerry Jaco, computer lab teacher and technology coordinator for Holy Angels School in Los Angeles. "From one computer, I can oversee all machines and each machine individually. I can power on and off the lab with one click, login/logout students, execute programs on all machines at once, send and collect documents, administer tests and surveys, and so on. ... It is an invaluable tool that I consider the second most important piece of software a computer lab needs after a solid networking OS."

<http://www.netsupport-inc.com>

### now!Board (Learning Resources)

Billed as a "portable interactive whiteboard," the now!Board turns any flat surface into an interactive whiteboard and also lets you control your computer from the front of the room—easily toggling between the virtual whiteboard, the internet, and your applications.

"I am using the now!Board as an interactive whiteboard alternative. I just project onto the wall or my regular whiteboard, and it becomes interactive," said Ben Curran, a teacher at University Prep Academy in Michigan. "In my fifth grade classroom, it's been great for annotating websites, note-taking, demonstrations, presentations, and all kinds of engaging, interactive activities. The kids love it. And it costs a fraction of a SMART or Promethean board."

<http://www.learningresources.com>



### PlascoTrac (Plasco ID)

With PlascoTrac, a student incident and ID tracking system, schools have an efficient way to track not only tardiness, but also violations like cell phone, dress code, and parking lot incidents. The software also can be used to man-



age activities such as assembly or field trip attendance, extracurricular activities, tutoring, or various classroom activities that take students off campus.

"This is the fourth year we have been using PlascoTrac for tracking tardies. The program is awesome," said Sharon Logan, a librarian for Brenham Independent School District in Texas. "Not only has it cut down the amount of tardies, but we are able to hold students accountable. Detentions must be served, and privileges are deprived when students receive more than six tardies in a semester. Our students are required to wear IDs. This past school year, we initiated the temporary system as well. Now, a student receives a temporary ID if the ID is not worn or left at home. Again, it goes back to accountability—plus it gives the administration the opportunity to view tardies and temporaries at the end of each day. A great administration tool!"

<http://www.plascotrac.com>

### Powerspeak<sup>12</sup> (Middlebury Interactive Languages)

Designed for elementary, middle, and high school students by Middlebury College in conjunction with K12 Inc., powerspeak<sup>12</sup> language-learning programs include intuitive games and activities that immerse students in a natural and powerful way to learn language. The content also aligns with state and national standards as defined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.





"Students pick the language that they would like to study, and they can progress at their own speed," said Mark Fruehe, a global studies teacher for Community Consolidated School District 93 in Illinois. "The students listen, read, write, and speak the language on a daily basis in a one-on-one atmosphere. Every student has a native-speaking online tutor. Students create an avatar of themselves that completes lessons and earns money. With the money, the students can buy things for their avatar. This motivates them to work on the lessons. Class surveys show that 89 percent of the students like or really like the program. They are very engaged, and they learn a lot."



<http://www.powerspeak.com>

### READ 180 (Scholastic Inc.)

READ 180 is a comprehensive system of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development that has been proven to raise reading achievement for struggling readers in grades 4-12.



READ 180 "has the flexibility and differentiation components available to reach middle school students who are reading anywhere from one to four grade levels below standard," said Steve Rish, learning behavior specialist for Wilmette District 39 in Illinois. "The program addresses those needs through whole-group instruction, small-group instruction, independent reading, and instructional software. The students in my class have made tremendous gains in their vocabulary, comprehension, and writing and are highly engaged in their learning. I would highly recommend this product."

<http://www.scholastic.com>

### SchoolMessenger (Reliance Communications)

SchoolMessenger is a suite of communication solutions for education, including an automated parent notification service, a survey tool, and an anonymous communication service called Talk About It.

"We use the system to alert parents to absences, grade reporting, school events such as open houses or athletic events, and school closings," said Harold Morgan, chief



information officer for Leslie County Schools in Kentucky. "We are able to contact every parent in our district within a time span of about 15 to 20 minutes. [And because it's] web-based, we can deliver messages from anywhere there is internet service, allowing us to reach out even when our district office might not have power." Through the product's survey tool, "we can now get more accurate information on things like how many students have computers, tablets, or smart phones at home. This has proven to be much more effective and reliable than passing out paper surveys to be taken home and returned by students. It allows us to have more confidence in our decision making."

<http://schoolmessenger.com>

### Science Starters (Scientific Minds)

Science Starters are web-based, multimedia programs for students in grades 3-11 that follow the "5E" instructional model: engage, explain, elaborate, explore, evaluate.

"As a first-year teacher, the Science Starters have been a lifesaver," said Kurt Reeves, a high school biology teacher for the West Orange-Cove Consolidated Independent School District in Texas. "They provide the review and remediation that my students need. Teachers in my department say that science assessment scores in our school improved tremendously when they began using the original Science Starters in 2007. They expect an even greater gain with the new, interactive Biology model."



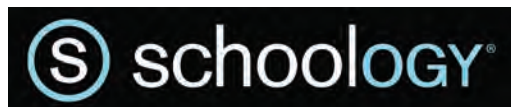
He added: "I especially like the way the modules give me teacher-guided and video options. I also like the way the teacher-guided option works with a remote presenter. This allows me to move around the room, keeping my students on task, as I lead them through the lesson. The video option, interactive flashcards, and assessments are ideal for independent student study from school or home. Great product!"

<http://www.scientificminds.com>

### Schoology

Schoology is a comprehensive online system for managing lessons, engaging students, and connecting with other educators. It combines the functionality of a learning management system with the utility of a social media network, and schools can import all their documents and course information from Google Docs, Blackboard, and Moodle into the system.

"Ease of use on the teacher side, coupled with the contin-



uous improvement on the company side, make this an outstanding product,” said Mark Garrison, instructional technology coordinator for White Bear Lake Area Schools in Minnesota. “The features—from media alumnus, grading, calendar, and discussions to Google integration—make this the perfect classroom learning hub. It is more than a place to house digital content and host online discussions. It is fully a digital extension of a teacher’s physical classroom.”

<http://www.schoolology.com>

### Skyward School Management System (Skyward Inc.)

Skyward’s School Management System includes a Student Management Suite (a web-based student information system with attendance, grading, scheduling, discipline, and more) and a School Business Suite, which encompasses accounts payable and receivable, bid and budget management, employee evaluation, payroll processing, inventory, substitute tracking and fulfillment, and more. The software automates reports and other processes, saving administrators time and freeing them from menial tasks.



“Our K-12 district uses the Skyward Student Management System for attendance, grading, scheduling, discipline, fee management, food service, athletic eligibility, transportation, keeping up with NCLB requirements, tracking our preschool program, and everything else that is required by our state board of education,” said Carolyn Grant, technology coordinator for Danville School District 118 in Illinois. “Skyward has fantastic, patient, helpful, and knowledgeable programming and tech-support staff, including a dedicated group who work specifically with the state [education] department to make sure the program is always up-to-date and meets the state’s requirements. ... This is the fourth student data management package our district has used since I began working in this capacity. This one is by far the best.”

<http://www.skyward.com>

### SimpleK12 (InfoSource Inc.)

SimpleK12 is a subscription-based professional learning network in which teachers can share ideas, collaborate, watch live and recorded webinars and how-to videos, and learn from one another as they strive to integrate technology effectively into their instruction.



“I am a middle school art and health teacher who has just been given new technology to use in my classroom. I am struggling to learn about what I can do with a document camera and projector,” said Holley Smothers of Thomas Jefferson Middle School in Jefferson City, Mo. “I happened to find SimpleK12, and it has changed my life! The webinars are great. The staff walks you through apps, programs, how to use different technology, and then there is support afterward. I am already up and running with a webpage, new lesson plans, and my students are loving the new things I am trying. ... I am improving as a teacher because of this site.”

<http://simplek12.com>

### SmartScope (SmartSchool Systems)

The SmartScope handheld digital microscope is easy to use for even preschool students. It comes with software that can record still images, videos, or time-lapse videos to view a week’s worth of change in minutes. Its six LED lights are easily controlled with a dial on the device, and it can magnify objects at up to 200x magnification.

Diana McMillan, a pre-kindergarten teacher for the Austin Independent School District in Texas, says the SmartScope is facilitating an inquiry-based approach to science for students at a very young age. “I have three digital



scopes in my class, and the SmartScope is the best because of its flexibility,” she said. “It takes photographs, video clips, time lapse, operates as a webcam, and has a measurement feature. It is so easy to use that my four-year-olds mastered it in one day! It is durable, and the price is right. I leave it out and the students are able to use it independently. I have other technological tools, such as iPads, [a] projector, [an iPod] Nano, flip cameras, and digital cameras—but my favorite ... tool is the SmartScope!”

<http://smartschoolsystems.com>

### ST Math (MIND Research Institute)

ST Math is a supplemental program that takes a visual approach to learning, tapping into the brain’s innate “spatial temporal” reasoning ability to visualize and solve math problems. Through a carefully engineered sequence of visual puzzles, students work at their own pace to solve increas-



ingly difficult problems that require them to think multiple steps ahead in space and time—and they receive instant feedback about why a solution works or doesn't.

"Over 16,000 K-5 students in Anaheim City School District are using ST Math," said Leisha Morton, math curriculum specialist for the district. "The non-linguistic representation of key mathematical ideas provides students, regardless of their language proficiency, access to higher-level thinking and problem solving without the hurdle of decoding text. ... [Our] school district has experienced gains in our high-stakes mathematical test scores since implementing the program, but more importantly, ST Math has made math meaningful and exciting for students."

<http://www.mindresearch.net>



### Techbooks (Discovery Education)

Discovery Education's Techbooks are inquiry-based digital textbooks based on the "5E" model of instruction. Much more than just digitized versions of static textbooks, the



Techbooks include videos, embedded assessments, and other interactive features that leverage the power of the internet, the company says.

"The online Science Techbook by Discovery Education has been adopted in our district as the core curriculum instructional material for our grade 6 students," said Ed Short, elementary science resource teacher for Florida's Brevard County Schools. "Our students are digital natives, and therefore they respond with great motivation and excitement when using an online program to learn science. ... Components such as interactive glossaries, simulations, Science Sleuths, and Myth Busters support the many online video and reading passages." Another reader, sixth-grade science teacher Sue Turpin of Indiana, said the Science Techbooks are "highly recommended by our science teachers."

<http://www.discoveryeducation.com>

### Time To Know

Time To Know is an innovative digital teaching and learning platform, designed specifically for one-to-one computing classrooms. It is currently available for fourth and fifth grade math and reading/language arts. Teachers can use the inter-

active curriculum and the digital teaching platform to manage all classroom activities and deliver a personalized learning experience for every student.

"We are using this product with second and fourth grade students," said Chris Sosa, principal of Lee Elementary School in Grand Prairie, Texas. "Teachers are loving the results ... and students are enjoying the learning that is occurring with the use of this technical opportunity. It is a great solution that helps many students with the intervention process." Grand Prairie teacher Laura Perry added: "Students love the program, and we have seen an increase in student achievement on district assessments."

<http://www.timetoknow.com>



**Time To Know**

### TI-Nspire (Texas Instruments)

TI-Nspire is a whole family of handheld devices and software that can display math exercises in a more dynamic and interactive fashion, allowing students to manipulate the data and see what effect these changes have in real time.

"I'm using the TI-Nspire CX in my physics and mathematics classrooms. It has greatly enhanced my ability to do formative assessment, enabled the students to do hands-on inquiry into the mathematics, and expanded our data collection capabilities," said Sean Bird, a teacher at Covenant



Christian High School in Indiana. "We have collected and analyzed data for linear motion, rotational motion, force, temperature, magnetic field, sound, light, and more. The color and backlit screen has added to the engagement and ease-of-use of the device. It has also helped students make connections. This is the best tool for teaching and learning math and science that has ever come to my classroom."

<http://education.ti.com>

### ResponseCard NXT (Turning Technologies)

The ResponseCard NXT offers the same features as other radio-frequency-based student response systems, but it also includes advanced capabilities such as cell-phone style text entry for short answer and essay questions—and a self-paced test mode for individual assessment. The unit also contains an LCD display that indicates responses have been received.

"We have begun using Turning Technologies' NXT stu-





dent response systems in our grade this past year and have already seen substantial increases in student engagement, participation, and test scores,” said Brian Wickenheiser, a sixth-grade teacher and elementary technology chair for Minnesota’s Esko School District. “By having real-time progress monitoring, we have been able to help students increase their learning [and] self-evaluation during formative assessments. ... Each student is also able to offer [his or her] opinion during a lesson, thereby prompting better small-group collaboration and class discussions. This has increased not only participation, but also the quality of work—each student knows [his or her] effort (or lack thereof!) is being observed.” He added: “The potential and value of this system is incredible—no other one-to-one device can give the versatility that the NXTs can give at only \$50 per student.”



<http://www.turningtechnologies.com>

### Ubermix

The ubermix is an all-free, specially built, Linux-based operating system designed by educators with the needs of education in mind. It takes all the complexity out of student devices by making them as reliable and easy-to-use as a cell phone, without sacrificing the power and capabilities of a full operating system, its creators say. With a turnkey, five-minute installation, 20-second quick recovery mechanism, and more than 60 free applications pre-installed, ubermix turns whatever hardware you have into a powerful device for learning.

“We presently use ubermix on about 3,500 netbooks at our school district,” said Jim Klein, director of information systems and technology for the Saugus Union School District in California. “The combination of low-cost hardware and reliable, free software has made one-to-one [computing] a practical reality for us, enabling us to transform the learning environment and engage our kids with social media tools. For us, netbooks running free software brings most—if not all—of the benefits of tablets to netbooks, without all the sacrifices.”

<http://www.ubermix.org>

### Web Help Desk (MacsDesign Studio)

Web Help Desk is an online help-desk solution for delivering IT support, managing assets, tracking software per-



## Web Help Desk

Powerful Software for Support Management

formance, and more. Users say it has saved them time and improved their IT efficiency.

“Web Help Desk has become an invaluable tool for our school. Not only has using WHD made it easier for our staff and faculty to access and track progress on their submitted tickets, but our IT department has come to really depend on WHD to keep track of all those tickets and better prioritize them as well,” said David Ogden, information and technology director for Bakersfield Christian High School in California. “Unlike other trouble ticket systems we’ve used in the past, WHD is very open to input from its customers and is constantly working to improve the product. I’d recommend WHD to any educational institution that needs something that is powerful and flexible, yet easy to set up and use.”

<http://webhelpdesk.com>

### webNetwork (Stoneware Inc.)

webNetwork is a “unified cloud platform” that lets

**stoneware®**

you access all your files and applications from any internet-connected device. It delivers a private data center, public cloud, and local device resources through a common web interface. This “webDesktop,” accessed online, delivers all files, applications, and reports through a single user ID and password on any device.

“We use this product to permit access to home directories for teachers and students,” said Reginald Washington, director of information systems for the Monroe Township Board of Education in New Jersey. “We also use this product to electronically distribute and collect documents.”

<http://www.stone-ware.com>

## Higher-education winners

### Aplia (Cengage)

Aplia is a learning solution designed to increase student effort and engagement. It includes online homework assignments that professors can assign to students; assignments can include problem sets, news analyses, tutorials, and—for economics—interactive market experiments. Assignments are automatically graded and provide students with detailed explanations for every question, and all



**Engage. Prepare. Educate.**

of Aplia's courses use multimedia to pique students' interest.

Ed Lyell, professor and interim chair of the School of Business at Adams State College in Colorado, has used Aplia for economics and business communication. "It moved my student achievement from low Cs to documented 80-percent plus on average," he said, adding that the program is "easier to use than any others that I have tried."

<http://www.aplia.com>

### Canvas (Instructure)

Canvas is a simple but powerful learning management system that is offered as either an open-source version that schools manage themselves or a cloud-based model hosted by the company. The software includes predictive analytics that indicate how at risk students are of failing or dropping a course. Clicking on a student's name will take instructors



to a page where they can see more detailed reports based on that student's grades, class participation, assignment completion, and outcomes (whether he or she has mastered the content).

"My college adopted Canvas recently as we started our online programs," said Linda Passamaneck, director of online education for Wright Career College in Kansas. "The system has a wide open interface ... that allow[s] for easy integration with student information systems and third-party tools. On the faculty and student user end, I will say — after working with almost all of the various learning management systems for over 15 years — that Canvas has been the easiest system for all end-users to learn, requiring very little training for faculty and course developers. ... Faculty report that they love the ability to quickly and easily record personal feedback messages to students, which they say has increase communications and responsiveness from students and improved communication between students and faculty. ... All of these tools are already integrated, easy to use, and don't require the large price tags or significant investment of IT staff to support and make the system usable as other low-cost LMS options do."

<http://www.instructure.com>

### LearnSmart (McGraw-Hill)

LearnSmart is an adaptive learning system designed to help students learn faster, study more efficiently, and retain more knowledge for greater success. It assesses and monitors students' knowledge using adaptive, interactive assessments based on students' strengths and weaknesses, then maps out a personalized plan for each student's success.

"I'm using this system to provide practice sheets as well as online homework assignments," said Shadrack Paris, an assistant professor at Ohio University. "Thus far, the system



# LearnSmart

has worked wonders in helping my students better understand conceptual concepts in chemistry. I'm hearing from students that it helps them approach problem-solving with more confidence."

<http://www.mhhe.com/learnsmart>

### LiveText

LiveText is a web-based application designed to aid in the development of portfolios, course assignments, and standards- or outcomes-based projects. LiveText

allows students and instructors to collaborate on classroom assignments, as well as track students' progress toward meeting outcomes.

"We use this web-based ePortfolio, assessment, and reporting software to monitor student performance and progress, identify opportunities to improve program quality..., and collect and manage key assessment data for accountability and accreditation," said Lance Tomei, director for assessment, accreditation, and data management at the University of Central Florida.

<http://www.livetext.com>



### Mediasite (Sonic Foundry)

Mediasite is an online platform for enterprise webcasting, lecture capture, and event hosting. It completely automates



the recording, distribution, management, and analytics of high-quality video and multimedia presentations.

Michael Sutterfield, equipment and applications specialist for the University Of Cincinnati's College of Allied Health



Sciences, says his school is using Mediasite for “streaming and managing all of our lecture captures.” He appreciates that “everything is included in one place, with no additional downloads of materials required.”

<http://www.sonicfoundry.com>

### Remote Proctor Now (Software Secure)

Remote Proctor Now leverages students’ own computer webcams to prevent cheating on online exams. It gives anyone with a high-speed internet connection and a computer the freedom of on-demand test taking, and eliminates the hassle of scheduling web proctors, going to testing centers, or commuting to campus.

# Remote Proctor NOW

“About 150 graduate Family Nurse Practitioner students are using this product,” said Doug Davis, manager of technology services at Samford University’s Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing. “This has benefitted the School of Nursing by allowing our graduate students to take proctored test from anywhere in the country. Over the course of the FNP program, our students will save money and time by taking proctored tests on their own computer instead of spending extra money to go to a live proctor site. The efficiency of this product ... allows us to test our students with security and safety. Remote Proctor maintains our integrity of testing while providing convenience and technical assistance. This allows the students to learn online without having to step into a classroom.”

<http://www.softwaresecure.com>

### Salesforce

Salesforce is an enterprise, cloud-based customer relations management program that colleges and universities are using to manage their fundraising and alumni outreach programs.

“Wayne State University uses Salesforce to (1) manage recruitment efforts; (2) provide customer service to prospective and current students who call, eMail, or visit; (3) enhance communication; (4) develop sophisticated business intelligence to improve recruitment and retention; and (5) implement business process improvement,” said Kathleen Lueckeman, senior director of customer relationship management and director of the Office of Graduate Admissions. “We currently have significant increases in new freshman, transfer, and graduate student registration. ... Salesforce’s Web-to-Lead and Web-to-Case functions [also] have eliminated lead cards and paper forms, speeding our service and processing times.”

<http://www.salesforce.com>

### SoftChalk

SoftChalk is a content authoring program that makes it easy for users to create interactive online lessons.

“This is a neat, easy-to-learn content producing software,” said Becky Bradley, interim library director at Lone Star College Kingwood in Texas. “I use it in online classrooms to make lessons [that] are engaging and [that] look professionally done.”

<http://softchalk.com>



## Purchasing Intelligence = Intelligent Purchasing

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<http://www.eschoolnews.com/RCA2013-2014/>

*(Remember: Educators only; sorry; no vendors allowed.)*





### Tegrity Campus (Tegrity Inc.)

Tegrity Campus is a fully automated lecture-capture solution used to record lectures as well as supplementary course content. Its cloud-based model scales affordably, and students can search the content, collaborate with their instructors and classmates, take notes, set their own bookmarks, and more.

"As an instructional designer, I have used Tegrity Campus over a dozen different ways," said Trina Kilty of Laramie County Community College. "Since I am responsible for faculty training, I use it to record training and workshops for those unable to attend. As a member of the Learning Technologies Committee on campus, I've used Tegrity to record vendor demonstrations of different products so that committee members unable to attend may still view the demonstration. ... As an adjunct instructor, I use Tegrity to record myself explaining concepts missed on the exam for students. Tegrity has the ability to create a private link of a recording that is shared just between me and the student. ... [It] has been a part of our college for over five years, and the options, service, and ease just continue to improve every year."

<http://www.tegrity.com>



**WorldWideWhiteboard®**

### WorldWideWhiteboard (Link-Systems International)

WorldWideWhiteboard is a platform for online tutoring, collaboration, and office hours through either live (synchronous) or asynchronous connections.

"We use this product for our online Writing Center," said Leah Rogin-Roper, English professor and Writing Center coordinator for Arapahoe Community College in Colorado. "It allows students to work in real-time interactive sessions with tutors. The features of WorldWideWhiteboard are intuitive and easy for students to use, but allow multiple levels of interaction. Tutors can chat with students, have video or audio sessions, and mark up their essays with suggestions, highlighting, underlining, typed conversations, and more. ... This product is particularly helpful for students taking online courses or studying at our satellite campuses, to allow them access to the same great, professional tutors who work on campus, from the convenience of the student's own home."

<http://www.link-systems.com>

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## HONORABLE MENTIONS



**ActivBoard/ActivClassroom** (Promethean)  
**Aesop absence management software** (Frontline Technologies)  
**All Abilities ePlayground** (Sonokids)  
**AwesomeStories**  
**BlendedSchools.net**  
**Boardmaker Studio** (Mayer-Johnson)  
**BrainPOP**  
**Build Your Own Curriculum** (School Software Group)  
**Casper Suite** (JAMF Software)  
**CCC! Video On Demand** (New Dimension Media)  
**Classmate PC** (Intel Corp.)  
**College Planner** (Naviance)  
**CompassLearning Odyssey** (CompassLearning)  
**Curriki**  
**DaCast Streaming as a Service**  
**Discovery Education streaming** (Discovery Education)  
**Dogo News**  
**Dropbox**  
**eChalk Anytime** (eChalk)  
**eTriton** (Harris School Solutions)  
**FastMath** (Scholastic)  
**Galaxy tablets** (Samsung)  
**Genius SIS**  
**Glogster**  
**GoClaim** (Go Solutions Group)  
**Google Apps for Education** (Google Inc.)  
**GradeCam**  
**Haiku LMS**  
**HippoCampus.org** (Monterey Institute for Technology in Education)  
**iPad** (Apple Inc.)  
**iRubric** (RCampus)  
**The JASON Project**  
**Join.me** (LogMeIn Inc.)  
**Kinect for Xbox 360** (Microsoft Corp.)  
**Kurzweil 3000** (Cambium Learning)

**LanSchool** (Stoneware Inc.)  
**Livescribe pen** (Livescribe Inc.)  
**MicroCareerBursts** (Microburst Learning)  
**myTrack** (eScholar)  
**Naiku**  
**NoodleBib** (NoodleTools)  
**Nook Touch** (Barnes & Noble)  
**OnLive Desktop** (OnLive Inc.)  
**OPALS: Open-Source Automated Library System** (Media Flex Inc.)  
**ParentSquare**  
**Pixie** (Tech4Learning)  
**PresenceLearning live online speech therapy**  
**Prezi cloud-based presentation software**  
**QwertyTown** (Second Nature Learning)  
**Raptivity** (Harbinger Knowledge Products)  
**ReadWriteThink.org**  
**Read & Write Gold** (Texthelp Systems)  
**RealeWriter** (RealeStudios)  
**Science Buddies**  
**Scratch** (MIT Media Lab)  
**Sentinel** (Kajeet for Education)  
**Shakespeare in Bits** (MindConnex Learning)  
**SMART Board** (SMART Technologies)  
**SmartMoves** (FableVision)  
**SmartPath Enterprise Wireless System** (Black Box Network Services)  
**Spiceworks network management software**  
**Sqworl visual bookmark tool**  
**Study Island** (Archipelago Learning)  
**TAP-it** (SmartEd Services)  
**TenMarks Online Math Program** (TenMarks Education)  
**TIPS** (Awarity)  
**Turnitin** (iParadigms)  
**U Tip Bully Buster** (e2campus)  
**VoiceThread**  
**WatchKnowLearn.org**  
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